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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/722,943	11/25/2003	Yukinori Midorikawa	980765D3/LH	9621

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FRISHAUF, HOLTZ, GOODMAN & CHICK, PC
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EXAMINER

BOTTORFF, CHRISTOPHER

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3618

DATE MAILED: 05/31/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/722,943

Applicant(s)

MIDORIKAWA ET AL.

Examiner

Christopher Bottorff

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 17 March 2005.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 2-17 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 4 and 11 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 2 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 3, 5-10, 12-17 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

The amendment filed March 17, 2005 has been entered. Claim 1 is canceled.
Claims 2-17 are pending.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Frantom et al. US 4,655,312 in view of Uemura et al. US 5,495,254.

Frantom et al. disclose an automotive passenger restraint and protection apparatus for an automotive vehicle having a seatbelt 10. See Figure 1. The apparatus comprises a motor that drives a retractor 14; seatbelt attaching state detecting means 38 for detecting whether the seatbelt is in a state attached to the occupant or in a state disconnected from the occupant; danger degree detecting means 28, 32 for detecting a significant degree of danger of collision of the automotive vehicle; and control means 30 for controlling the motor so as to retract the seatbelt to a limit thereof and then protract the seatbelt to thereby give a predetermined amount of looseness to the seatbelt. See column 3, lines 10-12, 33-39, 40-46, and 66-68, and column 4, lines 1-12.

The control means controls the motor so as to give a first predetermined amount of looseness to the seatbelt when the significant degree of danger is not detected by the

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danger degree detecting means while the seatbelt is detected to be in said state attached to the occupant. See column 3, lines 46-55. The control means further controls the motor so as to give a second predetermined amount of looseness to the seatbelt which is smaller than the first predetermined amount of looseness when the significant degree of danger is detected by the danger degree detecting means while the seatbelt is detected to be in the state attached to the occupant. See column 14, lines 7-19.

Frantom et al. do not disclose that the danger degree detecting means comprises at least one of vehicle speed detecting means for detecting traveling speed of the automotive vehicle, braking detecting means for detecting stepping-on of a brake pedal of the automotive vehicle, steering angle change rate detecting means for detecting a rate of change in a steering angle of the automotive vehicle, ambient illuminance detecting means for detecting ambient illuminance of the automotive vehicle, and raindrop detecting means for detecting raindrops on the automotive vehicle.

However, Uemura et al. teach the desirability of providing a danger degree detecting means with a vehicle speed detecting means 6. See column 3, lines 23-39. From the teachings of Uemura et al., providing the danger degree detecting means of Frantom et al. with a vehicle speed detecting means would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made. This would assist in attaining more accurate predictions of potential danger.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 4 and 11 are allowed. Claims 3, 5-10, and 12-17 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. The detecting means of the prior art are not structured such that they detect danger in the manner defined in claim 3, in combination with the further limitations of claim 3. Also, the control means of the prior art are not arranged to control a motor as defined in claims 4-17, in combination with the further limitations of the prior art.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed March 17, 2005 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Contrary to Applicants' assertion, Uemura et al. "close the gap" between the present claimed invention, as defined by amended claim 2, and Frantom et al., as discussed above.

Conclusion

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

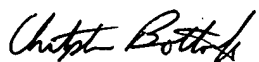
Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Christopher Bottorff whose telephone number is (571) 272-6692. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon.-Fri. 7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m..

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Chris Ellis can be reached on (571) 272-6914. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

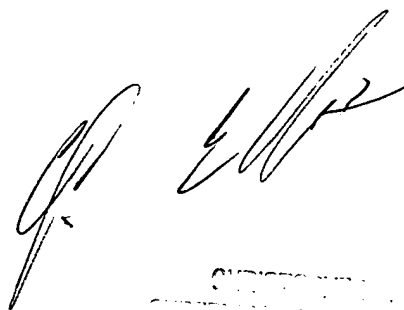
Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only.

For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>.

Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Christopher Bottorff



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